

Message Text

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ACTION ACDA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 ACDE-00 ERDA-05 CIAE-00 H-02

INR-07 IO-10 L-03 NSAE-00 OIC-02 OMB-01 PA-01 PM-04

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INFO SECDEF PRIORITY

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USDEL MBFR VIENNA

USNMR SHAPE

USCINCEUR

AMEMBASSY BONN

S E C R E T LONDON 12654

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PARM, NATO, MBFR, UK

SUBJECT: MBFR: UK POSITION ON TRILATERAL

REF: LONDON 12430

SUMMARY. UK EMBASSIES BONN AND WASHINGTON HAVE BEEN IN-
STRUCTED TO SEEK INFORMATION ON U.S. AND FRG AIRCRAFT
REPLACEMENT PLANS AND TO TRY TO ELIMINATE DISPARITIES IN
ESTIMATES OF THE DURATION OF THE SOVIET PROGRAM OF
NUCLEAR CAPABLE AIRCRAFT. SATISFACTORY ANSWERS FROM U.S.
AND FRG WOULD REMOVE OFFICIAL LEVEL CONCERNS ABOUT TNESE
ASPECTS OF OPTION III AND WOULD PERMIT SUBMISSION OF
OPTION III TO MINISTERS FOR FINAL HMG APPROVAL. THIS
WOULD NOT REQUIRE TRILATERAL MEETING BUT SUCH A MEETING
COULD USEFULLY BE HELD LATER TO DISCUSS FORCE DEFINITION
AND SERVICE SUB-CEILING. END SUMMARY.

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1. TERENCE WOOD OF FCO CALLED US IN AUGUST 14 TO DISCUSS

OUTSTANDING TRILATERAL ISSUES IN MBFR. HE SAID THAT UK EMBASSIES WASHINGTON AND BONN HAVE BEEN ASKED TO CONSULT WITH HOST GOVERNMENTS ON TWO ISSUES RELATING TO CEILINGS AND CONSTRAINTS, AIRCRAFT REPLACEMENT AND CONSTRAINTS ON SOVIET NUCLEAR CAPABLE AIRCRAFT.

2. ON AIRCRAFT REPLACEMENT BRITISH FEEL THAT THEY NEED TO BE SATISFIED ABOUT ANY POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS FOR THEIR OWN AIRCRAFT REPLACEMENT PLANS BEFORE THEY RECOMMEND TO MINISTERS THAT UK ACCEPT THE U.S. OPTION III APPROACH ON CEILINGS AND CONSTRAINTS. UK EMBASSIES ARE BEING ASKED TO SECURE U.S. AND FRG DETAILED PLANS FOR AIRCRAFT DEPLOYMENTS IN NGA THROUGH 1980. UK POSSESSION FINAL FIGURES FROM BOTH COUNTRIES SHOULD PROVIDE BASIS FOR UK TO PROCEED TO ACCEPT U.S. POSITIONS.

3. FCO HOPES THAT U.S. AND FRG CAN PROVIDE PROMISED FURTHER THOUGHTS ON DURATION OF SOVIET PROGRAM FOR INCREASING NUCLEAR CAPABLE AIRCRAFT IN THE NGA. HOPE HERE WOULD BE THAT DISCREPANCY BETWEEN UK ESTIMATE IMPLYING LARGE SHORT-TERM INCREASES IN SOVIET NUCLEAR CAPABLE AIRCRAFT AND U.S. ESTIMATE INDICATING SMALLER NUMBERS COULD BE RECONCILED IN SUCH A WAY THAT ISSUE OF SOVIET ACTIONS "UNDERMINING THE BASIS OF MBFR" WILL NOT BECOME OBSTACLE TO NATO AGREEMENT ON GUIDANCE. THEY RECOGNIZE THIS IS SMALL PROBLEM AND HOPE THEY CAN BE SATISFIED ON THIS POINT WITHOUT A TRILATERAL MEETING.

4. THE BRITISH FEEL A TRILATERAL MEETING WOULD BE USEFUL TO TRY TO ACCOMPLISH TRILATERAL UNIFIED POSITION ON FORCE DEFINITIONS AND SERVICE SUB-CEILINGS PRIOR TO SPC CONSIDERATION OF THESE POINTS. THEY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THIS CONSIDERATION WOULD BEAR ON THE DIFFERING U.S. AND UK/FRG APPROACHES TO COMMON CEILING.

5. BRITISH HAVE HAD FURTHER THOUGHTS ON TIMING OF SUCH A MEETING. THEY NOW FEEL SECOND HALF OF SEPTEMBER WOULD BE MOST DESIRABLE. JOHN WILBERFORCE WILL COME ON DUTY MID-SEPTEMBER. TRILATERAL PREPARATION AND PARTICIPATION WOULD BE VALUABLE FOR HIM AS WELL AS FOR NEW SUPERVISING

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UNDERSECRETARIES THOMSON AND SYKES.

6. WOOD EMPHASIZED THAT HMG IS NOT PRESSING FOR TRIPARTITE MEETING BUT THAT UK WOULD BE WILLING TO ATTEND SUCH A MEETING AND SEES POTENTIAL BENEFIT IN DISCUSSING FORCE DEFINITION AND SERVICE SUB-CEILING PROBLEMS.

7. AS TO VENUE, HMG IS EASY. WOOD SAYS UK MBFR

OFFICIALS ALWAYS ENJOY TRIP TO WASHINGTON. ON THE OTHER
HAND, UK WOULD BE WILLING TO HOLD MEETING HERE AND NEW
FCO SENIOR OFFICIALS MORE LIKELY TO ATTEND MEETING HERE.

RICHARDSON

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